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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

MM93-48 8-16-94

The Honorable Reed Hunt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street N.W. Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Sir

As a grandmother of young children I strongly urge the FCC to take notice to improve T.V. programs for children.

T.V. has the potential for educational use. Much can be done to improve this. Young children need and want programs that teach, instruct and aid in their growth. Schools can't do it all.

Thank you for listening,

Sincerely

Mary R. Cooper

MM 93-48

The Honorable Reed Hundt, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Honorable Hundt:

I ask you to strengthen the guidelines for enforcement of the Children's Television Act of 1990 to provide more educational and informational programs for children.

Children need special consideration. They are the country's future. FCC must stand up for children and develop guidelines for a clearer definition of educational programs, and require that these programs be shown at times when children are most likely to be watching.

Schools are underfunded and troubled. Many children are not prepared for school. Functional illiteracy and drop outs are serious problems. There is a tremendous potential for the educational use of television. An hour a day would be a minimum reasonable amount of educational programming specially targeted to children.

Television is a powerful influence. A few excellent programs have been developed as a result of the Children's Television Act. With clearer guidelines, more quality programs should be produced.

Thank you for your assistance in this effort to improve television programming for children.

Carole J Wyatt
Member, Ogle County Homemaker's
Extension Association

MM 93-48

July 16, 1994

Honarable Reed Hundt
Chairman of the FCC
Washington, D.C.

Re: Enforcement of the Children's Television Act of 1990

I think there are some very good educationsl programs on for the pre-school age, but what about the older children? There are a few shows like "Where is Carman Sandiego?" and "Ghost Writer" for the 8-10 year olds. What about the pre-teen and early teens?

The shows they tune in at prime time (6:30 - 9:00) like "The Simpsons" is very disrespectful to parents and adults in general. The networks should be more aware of what is being presented as entertainment as well as educational programing.

Those after school specials are very good programs, But are put on at the wrong time. The school bus doesen't even leave most schools till 3:45 and thats the time the program starts. The show the kids should have seen is going off about the time the kids are walding in the door.

Television is a powerful influence on children, let's get it channeled in the right direction.

Sincerely

Ellen Berg

Ellen Berg

94-2096

MM93-48

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KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

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18 July 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Federal Communications Commission
Chairman Reed Hundt
Commissioner Andrew Barrett
Commissioner Rachelle Chong
Commissioner James Quello
Commissioner Susan Ness

Dear Mr Hundt:

FR: John Murray, Professor and Department Head

RE: Hearing on Children's Television, Supplemental Material

Thank you, individually and collectively, for establishing the June 28th hearing on children's television.

I am sorry that I was unable to attend or participate in the hearing but I have followed the debate with great interest. In this regard, I thought that you might have use for two review articles that I have written on the general history of policy and research concerns:

1. The Developing Child in a Multimedia Society, in Children and Television: Images in a Changing Sociocultural World, Sage Publications, 1993.
2. Impact of Televised Violence, to appear in the Hofstra Law Review, Summer, 1994.

Once again, thanks for your interest in children's television. Please call if I can be of any assistance in your deliberations.

Cheers

P.S. I am looking forward to your presentation at APA in Los Angeles. Give me a call if I can be of any help. I will be out of the office, at our cottage in Virginia, until APA but you can reach me the numbers attached.

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12 July 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dean Barbara Stowe

FR: John Murray

RE: Vacation and Conference Leave and Acting Head

I will be on annual leave for vacation in Virginia in late July and early August and then travel to Los Angeles to participate in the American Psychological Association Conference.

Steve Bollman has kindly agreed to serve as Acting Head during my absence. If needed, I can be contacted at the following points:

25 July to 9 August:
Deltaville, Virginia
~~(804) 776-9715~~

10 August to 11 August:
Washington, D.C.
Marriott Key Bridge
(703) 524-6400

11 August to 15 August:
Los Angeles, California
New Otani Hotel
(213) 628-5242

cc: HDFS Faculty

Children & Television

Images in a Changing Sociocultural World

GORDON L. BERRY
JOY KEIKO ASAMEN

SAGE Publications
International Educational and Professional Publisher
Newbury Park London New Delhi

Contents

1. The Developing Child in a Multimedia Society

JOHN P. MURRAY

To suggest that children growing up in the 1990s live in a very different world than the one their parents or grandparents experienced as children is not only to state the obvious but to *understate* the obvious. Although many of the parents of young children in this last decade of the 20th century grew up with television, some of these parents—and almost all of the grandparents—lived in a world without television as a source of information and entertainment.

There are, of course, other changes in the information environment in which children live today. The current media ecology of childhood includes computers and video games, VCRs and laser discs, and ever-changing audio systems with computer interfaces that *could* enhance the integration of both education and entertainment in a multimedia society. However, that integration has not yet occurred and its potential remains a matter of some conjecture. Still, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that television is one of the core components of a multimedia society that has dramatically altered the nature of childhood and the development of children.

The central role that television plays in a multimedia environment for children results from the fact that television—unlike all other media before or since—reaches children at a much earlier age and with a greater intensity. This enhanced potential for influencing the intellectual and emotional development of young viewers is simultaneously television's greatest promise and greatest disappointment. The history of these great expectations for television and the prospects for the future serve as the focus of this review of the developing child in a multimedia society.

Expectations

Television had its debut in North America in 1939 as an object of curiosity at a world's fair exhibition. During the half century since this official debut, television has contributed to major alterations in the life-styles and information environments of children. One of the first social commentators to offer a prediction on the impact of television was the essayist E. B. White, who previewed a demonstration of television in 1938. Writing in *Harper's Magazine* in that year, White noted:

> I believe television is going to be the test of the modern world, and in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision, we shall discover either a new and unbearable disturbance of the general peace or a saving radiance in the sky. We shall stand or fall by television—of that I am quite sure. (White, 1938, cited in Boyer, 1991, p. 79)

And so it was that television, at its birth, gave rise to premonitions of conflict over its potential for benefit or harm.

This concern about the positive and negative influences of television has driven most of the research and public discussion concerning the development of this medium and the development of children over the past half century. The official starting date for television broadcasting in the United States is July 1, 1941, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) licensed and approved the full operation of the first commercial television stations. However, the development of television broadcasting was limited by World War II and full-scale broadcasting did not resume until 1946, when stations were once again required to broadcast a minimum of 12 hours of programming each week, with a gradual increase in broadcasting up to a minimum of 28 hours weekly by the end of the first 3 years of the broadcasting license (Andreasen, 1990; Comstock, 1989).

Despite the slow start to television broadcasting, this medium was quickly adopted and it diffused through the population at an accelerated pace. For example, in 1945 there were about 10,000 television sets in use, but that figure jumped to about 7 million sets 5 years later in 1950. By 1955, almost 65% of U.S. households had at least one television set, and by 1960 that figure had jumped to 90% of U.S.

households. Currently, 98% of households have a TV, with only 2% of households choosing not to purchase a television set.

Similarly, the amount of time spent watching television has increased over the years from about 4.5 hours per day in 1950 to 7.5 hours each day in the 1980s and 1990s. To give some reference for this magnitude of viewing, if you multiply 7.5 hours per day in the typical household by the number of households with television sets in use, you find that in 1 year Americans collectively spend about 30 million years of human experience watching television. This is a considerable amount of time to spend with television each year, and one might reasonably ask what effect this extensive viewing has on U.S. society.

To give a flavor of the range and depth of concern about television, one might reflect on the observations of a former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Newton Minow, who is best remembered for his "inaugural address" to the National Association of Broadcasters in 1961 in which he said:

> When television is good, nothing—not the theatre, not the magazines or newspapers—nothing is better. But when television is bad, nothing is worse. I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay there without a book, magazine, newspaper, profit-and-loss sheet, or rating book to distract you—and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland. You will see a procession of game shows, violence, audience participation shows, formula comedies about totally unbelievable families, blood and thunder, mayhem, violence, sadism, murder, western bad men, western good men, private eyes, gangsters, more violence, and cartoons. And, endlessly, commercials—many screaming, cajoling, and offending.

Thirty years later, the now former chair of the FCC, speaking on the 30th anniversary of the "vast wasteland" speech, observed: "In 1961 I worried that my children would not benefit much from television, but in 1991, I worry that my grandchildren will actually be harmed by it" (Minow, 1991, p. 12).

The "vast wasteland" speech had a galvanizing effect on public discussion of the potential of television to influence young viewers for good or ill. Three decades later we are still attempting to sort out the costs and benefits of this medium of long-distance sight and

sound. The controversies continue to rage about the most beneficial uses of television in all its forms and the difficulties of drawing the fine line between commercial profit and commercial exploitation. For example, concerns have surfaced around proposals to provide commercial television news services in schools, such as those promoted by Whittle Communications's Channel One (Murray, 1991; Pool, 1992). And yet, there are clearly great benefits to be derived from the effective use of television as an educational force in the lives of young viewers (Boyer, 1991; Palmer, 1988). So, what do we know about television's influence on the developing child and when did we know it?

Debates

The first official debates about television occurred in congressional hearings during the early 1950s (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 1952; U.S. Congress, Senate Committee of the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, 1955). These inaugural congressional investigations were focused on the impact of televised violence on children and youth and set the stage for subsequent commissions and committees. For example, the landmark reviews following the 1950s hearings include the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Baker & Ball, 1969), the Surgeon General's report on television violence (U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972), the report on television and behavior from the National Institute of Mental Health (1982; Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982), and the American Psychological Association review of television and society (Huston et al., 1992). Each of these investigations began with basic questions about the impact of television on young viewers and each has added incrementally to our understanding of the processes by which children develop in a mediated society.

Questions about the impact of television on children and adults have occupied the time and talents of hundreds of social scientists and educators over the past 40 years. Consequently, there have been over 4,000 books, articles, reports, and papers published on this topic since the mid-1950s (Huston et al., 1992; Murray, 1980). The major concerns expressed about television have been focused on its impact

on young viewers in relation to the influence of televised violence, the portrayal of the roles of men and women and various social and ethnic groups, and the influence of television viewing on school performance and general intellectual and emotional development in children.

Violence

As we noted earlier, one of the first concerns that surfaced in relation to the medium of television in the 1950s was a concern about the impact of televised violence on the behavior of young viewers. This was the principal focus of the congressional hearings in 1952 and 1955 and continued to be an issue in the violence commission in 1969, the Surgeon General's report in 1972, and in various other reports through 1992. The reasons for concern about violence, both then and now, include the fact that there has been a consistently high level of violence on television throughout much of its history and that children are considered more vulnerable to these violent portrayals because they are in the early stages of developing behavior patterns, attitudes, and values about social interaction. However, this is not to deny that many reports and studies have addressed the impact of televised violence on adults as well as children for many of the same reasons. The earliest studies in this regard turned on the work of Albert Bandura who studied preschool children at Stanford University (Bandura, D. Ross, & S. Ross, 1961) and the work of Leonard Berkowitz at the University of Wisconsin, conducting studies on the impact of film violence on college students (Berkowitz, 1962). These early laboratory-based and relatively focused investigations gave rise to the conclusion that media violence could lead to some short-term changes in aggressive behavior and attitudes on the part of children and young adults.

Subsequent studies and reviews, such as the work of Aletha Huston and her colleagues (Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Stein & Friedrich, 1972) expanded these studies and conclusions to take account of aggressive behavior occurring in more conventional or typical behavior settings. For example, one study conducted in the early 1970s (Stein & Friedrich, 1972) assessed the effects of viewing a diet of Batman and Superman cartoons on the aggressive behavior of preschoolers in the more natural setting of their classroom and playgrounds. One of the main conclusions from this study is that the

youngsters who had watched the Batman and Superman cartoons were much more likely to get into minor confrontations in the classroom and on the playground, were more active in these settings, and played less well and less cooperatively with their peers. On the other hand, the youngsters who had watched the diet of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* were more likely to play cooperatively, offer to help other children and teachers, share toys and equipment, and express concern about others' emotional well-being. One of the interesting features of this research is the suggestion that television can have either beneficial or harmful effects on viewers' behavior and that the nature of the effects depends upon the nature of the programming viewed. To be sure, there are many other factors that affect these relationships and there has been considerable debate about the nature of these influences and the extent of concern about televised violence (Comstock & Paik, 1991; Donnerstein, Linz, & Penrod, 1987; Freedman, 1984, 1986; Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huston et al., 1992; Murray, 1980; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982; U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972). Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a considerable amount of violence on television and that this violence on the small screen may translate into changes of attitudes, values, or behavior on the part of heavy viewers. For example, studies by George Gerbner and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990) have shown that on average over the past 20 years, 1 hour of "prime-time" evening television programming contains 5 violent acts whereas 1 hour of Saturday morning children's programming contains an average of 20-25 violent acts. These figures and levels of violence have fluctuated somewhat over the past quarter of a century of detailed content analyses, but the average child watching an average amount of television will see about 20,000 murders and 80,000 assaults in his or her formative years. That's about 100,000 violent acts before a youngster becomes a teenager. Some of the violence will be seen on realistic programs and some will be seen on cartoons, but we know from various studies that all forms of violent programming may have possible harmful effects on viewers.

Three possible effects have been the focus of most concern about TV violence: Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others; youngsters may be more fearful of the world around them; and children may be more willing to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others. Although the effects of television violence are not simple and straightforward, meta-analyses and reviews of a large body of research (Huston et al., 1992; Wood, Wong, & Chachere, 1991) suggest that there are clearly reasons for concern and caution in relation to the impact of televised violence.

Roles

Content analyses of television programming over the past 20-30 years have consistently indicated that the portrayal of the roles of men and women and various social or ethnic groups bear little relationship to the life circumstances of these individuals beyond the small screen (Berry, 1988; Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990; Greenberg, 1980; M. Williams & Condry, 1989; Withey & Abeles, 1980). Although the portrayal of ethnic minorities and the roles of men and women have changed over the years as a result of increasing sensitivity to these issues on the part of both broadcasters and viewers, there remain clear limitations on opportunities for diverse role presentations for these groups. For example, following civil rights demonstrations during the 1960s, there were increases in the number of programs featuring Blacks in major roles on television. However, this trend began to reverse in the 1980s, when Blacks declined to about 8%, which is considerably below the percentage of Blacks in the U.S. population. So too, there were clear limitations on other ethnic groups. For example, Hispanics (3.5%), Asians (2.5%), and Native Americans (under 1%) (Berry, 1980; Greenberg, 1986).

In other areas, such as the portrayal of families on television, we know that there have been wide variations in the nature of families that dominate television at various periods in its history. One recent content analysis of over 900 television series broadcast between 1947 and 1992 suggest that there are some unusual peaks in particular types of families on televisions (Murray, 1992). For example, in the early days of television—from the late 1940s through the 1950s—the typical family consisted of one of two types: A mother and father with two or three children or husband and wife who were newlyweds just establishing their marriage and family relationships. However, in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, there was a sudden rise in the number of single-parent families portrayed on television. One might suspect that this was a response to a rising divorce rate in the United States and the consequent increase in single-parent

families. In the U.S. population during the 1960s and 1970s, and continuing through today, most of the single-parent households are female headed. However, on television during the 1960s and 1970s, most of the single-parent households were male headed. Moreover, this overrepresentation of male-headed households continues through the 1980s and 1990s. The reasons for this odd circumstance are difficult to detect, but they seem to derive from an expedient formula in entertainment television. Nevertheless, it would be helpful to encourage broader representation of the diverse structures of families on television, because we know that young viewers are affected by the families they see on the small screen (Dorr, Kovaric, & Doubleday, 1990).

Clearly, it is important to think about the ways in which various social roles and groups are portrayed on television, because they can have an important influence in shaping children's views of the world. Consider, for example, the role of police officers on television and children's conceptions of police officers. On the small screen, most police officers are seen in highly active, violent situations: shootings, beatings, high-speed chases. If you ask children about their understanding of what police officers do, you will find that most young children readily report that police officers chase people and arrest them and shoot guns and drive fast cars. On the other hand, if you ask police officers on urban or rural police forces, you will find that most of their daily activities consist of filling out forms and writing reports. Indeed, many career veterans of police departments around the country report that they have rarely or never fired their guns at lawbreakers.

Education

One of the strongly held beliefs about television is the notion that it is simply designed for entertainment. And yet, when viewers are asked about how they use television—how often they view, what they view, and why they view—they frequently demonstrate that they use television for many purposes beyond mere entertainment. For example, studies of audience members in the context of "uses and gratifications" theory (Murray & Kippax, 1979) have shown that some viewers use television in a very thoughtful and directive manner. Individuals who report that they watch television to keep abreast of current events do, in fact, watch more news, documentaries, and

current affairs programs. Conversely, those who watch large amounts of television often report that they use television to "escape the boredom of everyday life" or to relax and to be entertained and, indeed, watch a wide variety of television programs with no particular preferences evident in their viewing patterns.

With regard to the direct contributions of television to education and intellectual development in children, the pattern is somewhat mixed. We know that television is a window on the world; that programming can take viewers to places they might never see and offer experiences they might never feel or encounter in their daily life. With regard to children, we know that television is indeed a "special medium for a special audience" because it transcends the boundaries of time and space (Dorr, 1986). In addition, particular programs have been shown to have very special beneficial effects. One need only think of *Sesame Street* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* to tap into a large body of research on the effectiveness of planned, carefully designed programming (Comstock & Paik, 1991; Dorr, 1986; Huston et al., 1992; Murray, 1980). On a more anecdotal level, it has been reported that programs such as *Reading Rainbow* have stimulated intense interest in the books featured on the programs, and an episode of *Happy Days* in which the Fonz acquired a library card prompted a rush on libraries (Charren & Sandler, 1983; Comstock, 1989; Huston et al., 1992).

On the other hand, television has been identified as a hindrance to education in the sense that television viewing is an activity that may "steal" time from other activities more directly related to success in school. For example, studies of the introduction of television in a small Canadian community have shown that television availability is associated with a decrease in reading ability or reading skills components (T. M. Williams, 1986). However, the evidence from other studies is somewhat mixed (Anderson & Collins, 1988; Bryant & Anderson, 1983). We do know that the outlook is not as bleak as Winn (1987) might believe, but it seems clear that we have not been particularly successful in using television to its full potential in the education of our youngest citizens (Boyer, 1991; Kunkel & Murray, 1991; Palmer, 1988). Moreover, we also know that television can be both entertaining and educational—a fact observed in studies of public broadcasting programs ranging from *Mister Rogers* to *Reading Rainbow* to *Sesame Street/Electric Company/Ghost Writer* but also observed in commercial television offerings such as a set of

series developed by CBS in the mid-1970s: *USA of Archie, ISIS,* and *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*; along with the 30-year performance of a commercial/public swing program, *Captain Kangaroo.*

And yet, these educational programs represent only a small portion of the programs broadcast on our public and commercial television stations. True, cable television adds several channels and a different program mix, but this is still a relatively small and isolated attempt to use television for broad educational purposes. The history of television program development, as Turow (1981) noted, is one of economic enhancement at the expense of education. The more recent entry of a commercial news service for high school students developed by Whittle Communications is an example of one of the more problematic entrepreneurial activities (Murray, 1991; Pool, 1992). And yet, we know that the provision of news and current events through television programming designed for young viewers can lead to increase in awareness of important issues (Burkart, Rockman, & Ittelson, 1992). The policy question turns on whether noncommercial programming such as *CNN Newsroom* is a better alternative to the commercial programming of Channel One. And there are other policy-related concerns about the control—local versus national—of the content of current affairs information in the classroom.

Clearly, television can play a major role in the education of young viewers. Part of that role has been defined by a range of Public Broadcasting System television programs and some cable television channels. However, the commercial television networks have an important role to play in this process, and the Children's Television Act of 1990 has helped to define the nature of this role through the provision of broadly defined educational programming as a component of license renewal. As a nation, we can do more to enhance the educational uses of television.

Hopes

The expectations and debates about television's potential for benefit or harm have been great and heated but we have not achieved the goal of integration of television and other components of a multimedia society in the service of the developing child. Nevertheless, hope springs eternal and there are many changes on the horizon. For example, the 1992 decision by the FCC to allow telephone companies to compete with cable television systems in the delivery of television programming to the home—the "video dial tone" concept—portends a revolution in the range of services and greatly expanded opportunities for integration of voice, data, and video.

Other significant changes affecting the future of children's television include the Children's Television Act of 1990, which was born of frustration over the systematic failure of the FCC to regulate in the public interest (Kunkel & Murray, 1991; Kunkel & Watkins, 1987; Levin, 1980; Minow, 1991). The 1990 act reintroduced limits on the amount of advertising contained in each hour of children's television, encouraged commercial television stations to broadcast some educational programming (broadly defined) for children, and established the framework for a national endowment for the development of children's television programs. This is an important development in the struggle to convince both the television industry and the viewing public to take television seriously, but it is only the beginning.

What is most needed to ensure adequate support for the developing child in a multimedia society is a collaborative effort among researchers, educators, broadcasters, and public policy specialists (Boyer, 1991; Flagg, 1990; Huston et al., 1992; Palmer, 1988) to develop a national telecommunications plan that will ensure a broad range of television programs targeted to the needs of children at various ages and stages of development. These programs would differ in their scope and theme, but they would share the characteristics of thoughtful, purposeful programming. We need to develop more programming for children that is both entertaining and educational. In short, we need to take television seriously without being too serious.

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IMPACT OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE

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Questions about the effects of television violence have existed since the earliest days of this medium. Indeed, the first expression of formal concern can be found in Congressional hearings in the early 1950s. For example, the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency held a series of hearings during 1954-55 on the impact of television programs on juvenile crime. These hearings set the stage for continuing congressional investigations by this committee and others in the House and Senate from the 1950s to the present.

These early congressional inquiries were focused on what we did not know about television and violence because social scientists were slow to respond to concerns about this medium of popular entertainment. Although there was a body of research on movies and comic books, these were quite different forms of media and different effects might be expected. Still, prominent social scientists such as developmental psychologist Eleanor Maccoby and sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld testified at the 1954-55 hearings that, although more research was needed, there were important reasons for concern about televised violence (Lazarsfeld, 1955; Maccoby, 1954; United States Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 1955a; 1955b; 1965a; 1965b; 1966).

The needed research began in the late 1950s and early 60s and is most commonly identified with the early experimental studies by Albert Bandura, working with preschool children, and Leonard Berkowitz, studying college students. These initial experimental studies, were followed by a rather large number of correlational and field-experiments during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s that elaborated the relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior. Research continues in the 1990s but social scientists have known the major outlines of the effects of televised violence for over a decade (Comstock & Paik, 1991; Huston, et al., 1992). And yet, the amount of violence on prime-time television has remained constant from the 1960s to the present--on average there are about five violent acts portrayed during each hour. However, children's television on Saturday mornings has varied somewhat over the past three decades--averaging about 20 to 25 violent acts per hour. Indeed, violence on children's television reached an all-time high of about 30 violent acts per hour in the early 1980s (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990).

Despite the high levels of violence on television and the extensive research base demonstrating the harmful effects of such programming, public perceptions of this issue remain confused because the public receives conflicting messages about the impact of television. For example, a December, 1992 announcement by the television industry noted that the three commercial television networks--ABC, CBS, and NBC--had agreed to establish common guidelines for the portrayal of violence. But, at the same time, key network officials (e.g., Head of Children's Programs at CBS and the Vice President for Program Practices and Standards at NBC) reported that there is no substantial amount of violence on TV and, even if there were too much violence, it is not possible to have rules about this issue.

This lack of public awareness of the influence of televised violence is not for lack of public hearings and reviews. In addition to the congressional hearings begun in the 1950s (which have continued through December, 1992), there are landmark reports that include: National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Baker & Ball, 1969); Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior (1972); the report on children and television drama by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (1982); National Institute of Mental Health, Television and Behavior Report (NIMH, 1982; Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982); National Research Council (1993), violence report; and reports from the American Psychological Association's "Task Force on Television and Society" (Huston, et al., 1992) and "Commission

on Violence and Youth" (American Psychological Association, 1992; Donnerstein, Slaby, & Eron, 1992). All of these reports confirm the harmful effects of media violence on the behavior of children, youth, and adults who view such programming.

And yet, despite decades of research, there is a perception that the research evidence on TV violence is unclear or contradictory. This perception is incorrect and this review will address the following issues: What do we know about the impact of television violence? What are some of the major research findings that form the basis for concern? Without belaboring prior reviews, the main issues revolve around the extent of exposure to violence and the correlational, experimental and field studies that demonstrate the effects of this viewing on the attitudes and behavior of children and adults.

Extent of Viewing:

Children begin watching television at a very early age, sometimes as early as six months, and are ardent viewers by the time that they are two or three years old. The general pattern of viewing is one of a steady rise in the number of hours viewed from early childhood through preadolescence and then a sharp drop in viewing during the adolescent years. According to audience rating surveys (Nielsen, 1988), the typical American household has the television set on for more than seven hours each day and children age 2 to 11 spend an average of 28 hours per week viewing (Andreasen, 1990; Condry, 1989; Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988). Naturally, the content viewed is more important than the amount of viewing and televised violence is one of the chief concerns.

The most extensive analyses of the incidence of violence on television are the studies conducted by Gerbner and his colleagues on the nature of American television programs. The results of these yearly analyses of the level of violence on American television for the 22-year period 1967-89 (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990) indicate a consistently high level of violence. There were some minor fluctuations in the early 1970s followed by a steady increase to 1976, a sharp decline in 1977, and then a steady climb to an all-time high in 1982-83. According to Gerbner's initial analysis (Gerbner, 1972), eight out of every ten plays broadcast during the survey period in 1969 contained some form of violence, and eight episodes of violence occurred during each hour of broadcast time. Furthermore, programs especially designed for children, such as cartoons, are the most violent of all programming. Later analyses by Gerbner and Gross (1974, 1976a, 1976b) indicated that there was some decline in violence levels from 1969 to 1975, at least in terms of the prominence of killing. However, the level of violence dramatically increased in 1976 (Gerbner et al., 1977) and was followed by a decline to one of the lowest levels in the 1977 season (Gerbner et al., 1978). This decline was quite dramatic. From the 'bumper-crop violence harvest' of 1976 to the relatively placid 1977, the percentage of programs containing violence fell from 90 to 75.5; the rate of violent episodes per hour fell from 9.5 to 6.7; and the rate of violence per program fell from 6.2 to 5.0 episodes. However, this downward trend was reversed in 1978 and through the early 1980s, and violence in weekend children's programs reached 30.3 violence episodes per hour in the 1982-83 season (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990). Overall, the levels of violence in prime-time programming have averaged about five acts per hour and children's Saturday morning programs have averaged about 20 to 25 violent acts per hour.

In addition to broadcast television, cable TV adds to the level of violence through new, more violent, programs, and by recycling older violent broadcasts. A recent survey by the Center for Media and Public Affairs (Lichter & Amundson, 1992) identified 1,846 violent scenes broadcast and cablecast between 6 a.m. to midnight on one day in Washington, D.C. The most violent periods were between 6 to 9 a.m. with 497 violent scenes (165.7 per hour) and between 2 to 5 p.m. with 609 violent scenes (203 per hour). Most of this violence is presented

without context or judgement as to its acceptability. And most of this violence in the early morning and afternoon is viewed by children and youth.

What are the effects of this exposure to these levels of televised violence? What do we know about the influence of TV violence from the broad range of correlational, experimental and field studies that have been conducted over the past 40 years?

Correlational Studies:

The weight of evidence from correlational studies is fairly consistent: viewing and/or preference for violent television is related to aggressive attitudes, values and behaviors. This result was true for the studies conducted when television was new, and the measures of children's aggression were teachers' ratings. It is still true for more recent studies when the measures of aggressiveness have become more sophisticated.

To choose several studies as examples: Robinson and Bachman (1972) found a relationship between the number of hours of television viewed and adolescent self-reports of involvement in aggressive or antisocial behavior. Atkin, Greenberg, Korzenny, and McDermott (1979) used a different measure of aggressive behavior. They gave nine to thirteen-year-old boys and girls situations such as the following. Suppose that you are riding your bicycle down the street and some other child comes up and pushes you off your bicycle. What would you do? The response options included physical or verbal aggression along with options to reduce or avoid conflict. These investigators found that physical or verbal aggressive responses were selected by 45 per cent of heavy-television-violence viewers compared to only 21 per cent of the light-violence viewers. In a further study, Sheehan (1983) followed two groups of Australian children, first and third-graders, for a three-year period. He found that for the older group, now third through fifth grade, both the overall amount of violence viewing and the intensity of viewing were significantly related to the child's level of aggressive behavior as rated by their classmates. Finally, in a study focused on adults, Phillips (1983) investigated the effects of the portrayal of suicides in television soap operas on the suicide rate in the United States using death records compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics. He found, over a six-year period, that whenever a major soap opera personality committed suicide on television, within three days there was a significant increase in the number of female suicides across the nation.

Experimental Studies:

The major initial experimental studies of the cause and effect relation between television/film violence and aggressive behavior were conducted by Bandura and his colleagues (Bandura, Ross & Ross,1961, 1963) working with young children, and by Berkowitz and his associates (Berkowitz, 1962; Berkowitz & Rawlings, 1963; Berkowitz, Corwin & Heironimus, 1963) who studied adolescents. In a typical early study conducted by Bandura (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963), a young child was presented with a film, back-projected on a television screen, of a model who kicked and punished an inflated plastic doll. The child was then placed in a playroom setting and the incidence of aggressive behavior was recorded. The results of these early studies indicated that children who had viewed the aggressive film were more aggressive in the playroom than those children who had not observed the aggressive model. These early studies were criticized on the grounds that the aggressive behavior was not meaningful within the social context and that the stimulus materials were not representative of available television programming. Subsequent studies have used more typical television programs and more realistic measures of aggression, but basically Bandura's early findings still stand.

Another early study (Liebert & Baron, 1972) investigated young children's willingness to hurt another child after viewing videotaped sections of aggressive or neutral television programs. The boys and girls were in two age groups, five to six and eight to nine-years-old. The aggressive program consisted of segments of The Untouchables, while the neutral program featured a track race. Following viewing, the children were placed in a setting in which they could either facilitate or disrupt the game-playing performance of an ostensible child playing in an adjoining room. The main findings were that the children who viewed the aggressive program demonstrated a greater willingness to hurt another child. One could ask, does the same effect hold for cartoons? The answer seems to be yes. Several studies have demonstrated that one exposure to a violent cartoon leads to increased aggression (Ellis & Sekyra, 1972; Lovaas, 1961; Mussen & Rutherford, 1961; Ross, 1972). Moreover, Hapkiewitz and Roden (1971) found that boys who had seen violent cartoons were less likely to share their toys than those who had not seen the aggressive cartoon. It seems clear from experimental studies that one can produce increased aggressive behavior as a result of either extended or brief exposure to televised violence, but questions remain about whether this heightened aggressiveness observed in the experimental setting spills over into daily life.

Field Studies:

In the typical field-experiment, the investigator presents television programs in the normal viewing setting and observes behavior where it naturally occurs. The investigator controls the television diet either by arranging a special series of programs or by choosing towns that in the natural course of events receive different television programs.

One early field-experiment was a study conducted by Stein and Friedrich (1972) for the Surgeon General's project. These investigators presented 97 preschool children with a diet of either 'antisocial' 'prosocial', or 'neutral' television programs during a four-week viewing period. The antisocial diet consisted of twelve half-hour episodes of Batman and Superman cartoons. The prosocial diet was composed of twelve episodes of Mister Roger's Neighborhood (a program that stresses such themes as sharing possessions and cooperative play). The neutral diet consisted of children's programming which was neither violent nor prosocial. The children were observed through a nine-week period, which consisted of three weeks of pre-viewing baseline, four weeks of television exposure, and two weeks of post-viewing follow-up. All observations were conducted in a naturalistic setting while the children were engaged in daily school activities. The observers recorded various forms of behavior that could be regarded as prosocial (i.e. helping, sharing, cooperative play) or antisocial (i.e. pushing, arguing, breaking toys). The overall results indicated that children who were judged to be initially somewhat aggressive became significantly more so as a result of viewing the Batman and Superman cartoons. Moreover, the children who had viewed the prosocial diet of Mister Roger's Neighborhood were less aggressive, more cooperative and more willing to share with other children.

In another field-experiment, Parke and his colleagues (Parke et al., 1977) found similar heightened aggression among both American and Belgian teenage boys following exposure to aggressive films. In the Belgian study--which replicated the findings of two similar studies conducted in the United States--teenage boys residing in a minimum-security institution were presented with a diet of either aggressive or neutral films. This study included a one-week baseline observation period, followed by one week of film viewing, and a one-week post-viewing observation period. There were four cottages involved. Two cottages contained boys with high levels of aggressive behavior; two contained boys with low levels of aggression. One of each pair of cottages was assigned to the aggressive film condition, while the other two viewed the neutral films. Only the two initially high-aggressive cottages were affected by the movies; those boys who saw the aggressive movies increased their level of aggression, while those who were exposed to the neutral films reduced their level of aggression.

Still, one might ask whether such results are found when the variation in television diets occurs naturally rather than by special arrangement. Williams and her colleagues (Joy, Kimball & Zabrack, 1986; Williams, 1986) had the opportunity to evaluate the impact of televised violence on the behavior of children before and after the introduction of television in a Canadian community. They compared children living in the before/after television town with their peers in two other towns where television was well established. The three towns were called Notel (no television reception), Unitel (receiving only the government-owned commercial channel-CBC), and Multitel (receiving the CBC and three American commercial networks-ABC, CBS and NBC). Children in all three towns were evaluated at Time 1 when Notel did not receive a television signal and again at Time 2 when Notel had had television for two years (it had received the government channel-CBC). Results indicated that there were no differences across the three towns at Time 1, but at Time 2 the children from the former Notel town were significantly more aggressive, both physically and verbally, than the children in the Unitel or Multitel towns. Moreover, only children in the Notel town manifested any significant increase in physical and verbal aggression from Time 1 to Time 2.

Extent of Effects:

We get a clearer picture about the extent of TV violence effects when we know more about the way children watch televised violence. For example, Ekman and his associates (Ekman et al., 1972) found that those children whose facial expressions, while viewing televised violence, depicted the positive emotions of happiness, pleasure, interest or involvement were more likely to hurt another child than were those children whose facial expressions indicated disinterest or displeasure.

The long-term influence of television has not been extensively investigated but we do have indications from several major studies. In an initial longitudinal study Lefkowitz and his colleagues (Lefkowitz et al., 1972) were able to demonstrate long-term effects in a group of children followed-up over a ten-year period. In this instance, Eron (1963) had previously demonstrated a relationship between preference for violent media and the aggressive behavior of these children at the age of eight. One question now posed was, would this relationship hold at later ages? To answer this question, the investigators obtained peer-rated measures of aggressive behavior and preferences for various kinds of television, radio and comic books when the children were eight years old. Ten years later, when the members of the group were eighteen years old, the investigators again obtained measures of aggressive behavior and television program preferences. The results for boys indicated that preference for television violence at age eight was significantly related to aggression at age eight ($r = .21$), but that preference for television violence at age eighteen was not related to aggression at age eighteen ($r = .05$). A second question posed was, could this adolescent aggressiveness be predicted from our knowledge of their viewing habits in early childhood? And, the answer seems to be yes. The important finding here is the significant relationship, for boys, between preference for violent media at age eight and aggressive behavior at age eighteen ($r = .31$). Equally important is the lack of relationship in the reverse direction; that is, preference for violent television programs at age eighteen was not produced by their aggressive behavior in early childhood ($r = .01$). The most plausible interpretation of this pattern of correlations is, that early preference for violent television programming and other media is one factor in the production of aggressive and antisocial behavior when the young boy becomes a young man.

In more recent, short- term, longitudinal studies conducted by Lefkowitz and Eron and by their colleagues (Eron, 1982; Huesmann, Langerspetz & Eron, 1984; Sheehan, 1983), they found some short-term effects of viewing violence on aggressive behavior of children in the United States, Australia and Finland.

Finally, the 22-year longitudinal study (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz & Walder, 1984)--a follow-up to the earlier Lefkowitz et al. (1972) study--has found significant causal-correlations (r = .41) between violence viewing at age eight and serious interpersonal criminal behavior at age 30.

In a different approach, a study by Belson (1978) has substantiated other long-term effects and has helped pin down which types of programs have the most influence. Belson interviewed 1565 youths who were a representative sample of thirteen to seventeen-year-old boys living in London. These boys were interviewed on several occasions concerning the extent of their exposure to a selection of violent television programs broadcast during the period 1959-71. The level and type of violence in these programs were rated by members of the BBC viewing panel. It was thus possible to obtain, for each boy, a measure of both the magnitude and type of exposure to televised violence (e.g. realistic, fictional, etc.). Furthermore, each boy's level of violent behavior was determined by his own report of how often he had been involved in any of 53 categories of violence over the previous six months. The degree of seriousness of the acts reported by the boys ranged from only slightly violent aggravation such as taunting, to more serious and very violent behavior such as: 'I tried to force a girl to have sexual intercourse with me; I bashed a boy's head against a wall; I threatened to kill my father; I burned a boy on the chest with a cigarette while my mates held him down'. Approximately 50 per cent of the 1565 boys were not involved in any violent acts during the six-month period. However, of those who were involved in violence, 188 (12 per cent) were involved in ten or more acts during the six-month period. When Belson compared the behavior of boys who had higher exposure to televised violence to those who had lower exposure (and had been matched on a wide variety of possible contributing factors), he found that the high- violence viewers were more involved in serious violent behavior. Moreover, he found that serious interpersonal violence is increased by long-term exposure to (in descending order of importance):

1. Plays or films in which close personal relationships are a major theme and which feature verbal or physical violence
2. Programs in which violence seems to be thrown in for its own sake or is not necessary to the plot
3. Programs featuring fictional violence of a realistic nature
4. Programs in which the violence is presented as being in a good cause
5. Violent westerns.

In summarizing the extent of the effects, we agree with Comstock (Comstock & Paik, 1991) that there are multiple ways in which television and film violence influence the viewer. Comstock suggests four dimensions: Efficacy relates to whether the violence on the screen is rewarded or punished; Normativeness refers to whether the screen violence is justified or lacks any consequences; Pertinence describes the extent to which the screen violence has some similarity to the viewer's social context; and Suggestibility concerns the predisposing factors of arousal or frustration. Drawing on these four dimensions, Comstock suggests (Comstock & Paik, 1991, pp. 254-255) situations for which we have experimental evidence of the effects of film or television violence:

1. Rewarding or lack of punishment for those who act aggressively (e.g., Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963).
2. If the aggressive behavior is seen as justified (e.g., Berkowitz & Rawlings, 1963).
3. There are cues in the portrayed violence which have similarity to those in real life (e.g., Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981).
4. There is similarity between the aggressor and the viewer (e.g., Rosekrans, 1967).
5. Strong identification with the aggressor, such as imagining being in their place (e.g., Turner & Berkowitz, 1972).
6. Behavior that is motivated to inflict harm or injury (e.g., Geen & Stonner, 1972).

7. Violence in which the consequences are lowered, such as no pain, sorrow, or remorse (e.g., Berkowitz & Rawlings, 1963).
8. Violence that is portrayed more realistically or seen as a real event (e.g., Atkin, 1983).
9. Violence which is not subjected to critical commentary (e.g., Lefcourt, et al., 1966).
10. Portrayals which seem to please the viewer (e.g., Ekman, et al., 1972).
11. Portrayals of violence that are unrelieved by other events (Lieberman, 1975).
12. Violence that includes physical abuse in addition to or compared to verbal aggression (e.g., Liebermann, 1975).
13. Violence that leaves the viewer in a state or arousal (e.g., Zillmann, 1971).
14. When viewers are predisposed to act aggressively (e.g., Donnerstein & Berkowitz, 1981).
15. Individuals who are in a state of frustration after they view violence, either from an external source or from the viewing itself (e.g., Worchel, Hardy, & Hurley, 1976).

Conclusions:

Thus, although there is continuing discussion about the interpretation of research evidence concerning the impact of television violence, most researchers would agree with the conclusion contained in the report by the National Institute of Mental Health (1982), which suggests that there is a consensus developing among members of the research community that "...violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs. This conclusion is based on laboratory experiments and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive, of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured. The research question has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect, to seeking explanations for the effect." (p. 6).

While the effects of television violence are not simple and straightforward, meta-analyses and reviews of a large body of research (Hearold, 1986; Huston, et al, 1992; Wood, Wong, & Chachere, 1991) suggest that there are clear reasons for concern and caution in relation to the impact of televised violence. To be sure, there are many factors that influence the relationship between viewing violence and aggressive behavior and there has been considerable debate about the nature of these influences and the extent of concern about televised violence (American Psychological Association, 1985; 1992; Centerwall, 1992; Comstock & Paik, 1991, Condry, 1989; Cook, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983; Donnerstein, Linz, & Penrod, 1987; Freedman, 1984; 1986; Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1982; Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huston, et al, 1992; McGuire, 1986; Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp, & Rubens, 1982; Murray, 1973, 1980; Murray & Kippax, 1979; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982; National Research Council, 1993; Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972). Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a considerable amount of violence on television and that this violence on the small screen may translate into changes in attitudes, values, or behavior on the part of both younger and older viewers.

Although there are differing views on the impact of TV violence, one very strong summary is provided by Eron (1992) in his recent Congressional testimony:

> There can no longer be any doubt that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in society. The evidence comes from both the laboratory and real-life studies. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socio-economic levels and all levels of intelligence. The effect is not limited to children who are already disposed to being aggressive and is not restricted to this country. The fact that we get this same

> finding of a relationship between television violence and aggression in children in study after study, in one country after another, cannot be ignored. The causal effect of television violence on aggression, even though it is not very large, exists. It cannot be denied or explained away. We have demonstrated this causal effect outside the laboratory in real-life among many different children. We have come to believe that a vicious cycle exists in which television violence makes children more aggressive and these aggressive children turn to watching more violence to justify their own behavior." (p. 1)

So too, the recent report by the American Psychological Association Task Force on Television and Society (Huston, et al., 1992) adds: "...the behavior patterns established in childhood and adolescence are the foundation for lifelong patterns manifested in adulthood" (p. 57).

The multiple discussions and communication strategies proposed in this project are designed to resolve these differing interpretations, both among social scientists and across the fields of mental health and journalism. The harmonic convergence of viewpoints and interpretation of research findings developed through this proposal will greatly enhance public understanding.

Furthermore, the recent summary (released in August, 1993) of the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth--Violence & Youth: psychology's Response--confirms the findings noted above and reaffirms the need to consider ways to reduce the level of violence in all media. In particular, the APA Commission suggests the development of rating systems for television programs and videotapes that would move beyond the existing rating system used by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) by focusing on more relevant behavioral descriptors and indicators of potential harm to children and youth. Indeed, other organizations, such as Media Scope, have suggested reviews of the rating system in the context of experiences in other countries where ratings are more attuned to the special needs of children (Federman, 1993). In addition to ratings issues, the APA Commission directed two strong recommendations for policy change to the Federal Communications Commission:

"We call upon the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to review, as a condition for license renewal, the programming and outreach efforts and accomplishments of television stations in helping to solve the problem of youth violence. This recommendation is consistent with the research evidence indicating television's potential to broadcast stations to 'serve the educational and informational needs of children,' both in programming and in outreach activities designed to enhance the educational value of programming. We also call on the FCC to institute rules that would require broadcasters, cable operators and other telecasters to avoid programs containing an excessive amount of dramatized violence during 'child viewing hours' between 6 am and 10 pm." (American Psychological Association, 1993, pp. 77-78)

To be sure, most of the research reviewed above is based upon a broad conception of media influence rooted in social learning theory. So too, there are alternative conceptions of media influence and viewer response, such as uses and gratifications theory (Kratz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Kippax & Murray, 1980), that place greater emphasis on the active role of the viewer in determining the effects of media through selective use. Also, there are a number of scholars who have offered alternative interpretations of some of the research on television violence. For example, Cook and his colleagues (Cook, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983) point out some cautionary notes in interpreting the range of studies reviewed by the NIMH in 1982 report on Television and Behavior and McGuire (1986) expressed strong concern about the overemphasis on the powerful effects of television. These are important tempering views and they need to be understood in the context of the large

body of research findings noted above. And yet, one must not dismiss the extensive, cumulative evidence of potential harmful effect associated with viewing violence in film, video, and television.

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